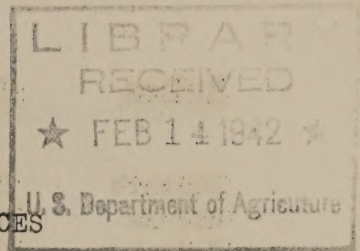


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United States Department of Agriculture
U. S. EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington, D. C.



REPORT OF CENTRAL STATES NUTRITION CONFERENCES

Omaha, Nebr., Feb. 10 to 12, 1941
Chicago, Ill., Feb. 13 to 15, 1941

The Central States Nutrition Conferences opened with contributions from outstanding authorities in the field of human nutrition. Dr. Lydia J. Roberts, head, Department of Home Economics, University of Chicago, spoke at the Chicago meeting. Dr. J. S. Hughes, professor of biochemistry, Kansas State College, spoke at the Omaha meeting, and Dr. Russell M. Wilder chairman, Food and Nutrition Committee, National Research Council, spoke at both meetings.

Dr. Roberts spoke on What Good Nutrition Means to a Family. She pointed out that most of the important foods which farm families need in their diet can be grown on the farm.

Food crops which farmers grow themselves are by far the cheapest and include simple things, such as meat, cereals, eggs, homegrown fruits, beans, and other vegetables.

Nevertheless, many farm families are suffering from malnutrition. If practice of good nutrition is essential for farm families, they need to develop new attitudes. Food for the family must be looked upon as one of the things that come first in farm planning. If we are going to make a really good living, it is necessary to have good health, and good health can be had only by eating the right food. It is therefore necessary for many farmers to change their attitude toward the importance of cash income, and to stress health and proper balanced diets ahead of cash returns.

By means of charts, Dr. Roberts drew a clear picture of the difference between good and poor diets on the farm. Poor diets usually contain large amounts of sugar and carbohydrates and not enough protein, calcium, iron, and important vitamins. Charts also showed the excellent foods that farm families in the Midwest can raise if they realize the importance of correct diet.

One of the most essential vitamins is vitamin C, which can be obtained from produce grown on most farms in the Midwest. To illustrate this point, Dr. Roberts gave a calendar of vegetable and fruit plantings which could supply the average farm family in the Midwest with the necessary amount of vitamin C throughout the year, thereby eliminating the need for buying orange juice. The calendar is as follows:

<u>Spring</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July and August</u>	<u>September and October</u>	<u>Winter</u>
Rhubarb	Strawberries	Raspberries	Peaches	Old potatoes
Greens	New potatoes	Potatoes	Plums	Apples
Radishes	Lettuce		Grapes	Carrots
			Pears	Tomatoes
			Cabbages	Cabbages

Because millers and bakers have decided to "enrich" white flour and bread, in the future they will have restored the amount of thiamin, riboflavin, and nicotinic acid which had been removed in the process of milling white patent flours. This new process will restore to the white bread the strength of these ingredients found in bread made of whole wheat.

Dr. Roberts led her audience to conclude that the farm can provide all the materials, including calories, minerals, and vitamins essential for good nutrition. Through proper teaching and emphasis, the Extension Service, including both home demonstration and the agricultural staffs, can help the farm people to adopt practices that will assure to them the basic element of successful farming and farm life, namely, that of furnishing an adequate farm family food supply.

Dr. Hughes discussed vitamins and other newer knowledge of nutrition. He displayed a set of 10 different-sized vials, each containing a different substance of known chemical composition called a vitamin. Each of the 10 substances is necessary to keep the human body functioning properly. The contents were as follows: Carotene (pro-vitamin A); riboflavin (vitamin B-2 or G); tocopherol (vitamin E); thiamin (vitamin B₁); ascorbic acid (vitamin C); calciferol (vitamin D); (vitamin K, - antihemorrhagic); pyridoxine (vitamin B₆); nicotinic acid (pellagra-preventive); and pantothenic acid (dermatitis factor).

Dr. Hughes called these 10 compounds, tools with which living cells carry on their activities. Plants make the materials. Animals obtain them from plants. One big problem in nutrition is to learn some way of preserving the nutritive value of the young growing material.

Dr. Hughes mentioned that market milk, from cows run on green pasture, contains a larger amount of vitamin A and carotene. So long as any animal or human being is fed the natural foods contained in grass and green plants growing under favorable conditions, and is kept in his natural environment, there is no cause for worry about malnutrition.

Dr. Hughes recommended the following publications as sources of information for nutrition workers. (These publications may be consulted in most libraries):

1. Yearbook of Agriculture - Food and Life. United States Department of Agriculture. 1939. 1165 pages. Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

2. Symposium - The Vitamins. 1939. 637 pp. American Medical Association, Chicago, Ill.
3. Animal Nutrition. Leonard A. Maynard. 1941. 611 pp. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York.
4. Chemistry of Food and Nutrition. Henry C. Sherman. 1941. 611 pp. Macmillan Co., New York.
5. Newer Knowledge of Nutrition. E. V. McCollum. 1940. 701 pp. Macmillan Co., New York.
6. The various bulletins issued by the Division of Foods and Nutrition, Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. (See U. S. Department of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 60, for printed publications.)

Dr. Wilder's talk, "Nutrition in the United States: A Program for the Present Emergency and the Future" has been mimeographed as a separate, and distribution has been made. (Mimeograph No. 673-41).

Following the presentation of talks by these nutritional authorities, the remainder of the conference period at each meeting was given to a brief presentation of selected topics by one or more members of the extension personnel of the conference. This was followed by general discussion by the group. The topics and selected excerpts from the discussion follow:

Income and the Family Food Supply

Indiana.--Farm-management studies presented from Indiana reveal that the people of lowest income had the poorest gardens. A study of 180 individuals who lived on Indiana farms and worked part time as industrial workers in town, and sold 22 to 40 percent of produce grown, showed that the income for farm produce raised was \$.09 an hour, whereas the rate for their industrial work was \$.75 an hour. For farm families with fairly adequate incomes, the problem is to convince them of their need for certain foods. If convinced of their need, they can grow them or purchase their supply of foods. For those with inadequate incomes, there are two problems. First, to convince them of the need, and, second, to teach them how to produce their supply of foods.

The question was raised whether producing food efficiently is not less important than inducing families to raise the crops needed in order to have a well-balanced diet. In too many cases, farm families sell food that is needed for own family use, for health. They substitute food lacking the essentials for balanced nutrition.

Factors to be taken into consideration are the returns for labor put into home-grown crops. Certain foods essential to nutrition are

grown in quantity. Home production is the most reliable and most economical source of needed foods. We must, however, consider whether it is always an economical proposition when we take into account the health, doctor bills, and like considerations. It may not be so desirable to have the women of the house, young mothers for instance, work long hours in the garden. However, these problems are to be taken into account by the family.

Wisconsin has made studies of the amount of vegetables required on the average farm in terms of what is needed as a minimum for good nutrition in the family. This estimate was made on the basis of the quantity needed by a family of five and provided by a garden space of 60 by 76 feet. The studies include a timetable as to successive plantings, cost of seed, and the like. Farmers taking part in this project kept record charts to get an idea of what they put into the garden, as well as what they took out. It was emphasized that operating a family farm garden requires a technique different from that of operating a commercial garden.

How May Underlying Problems Affecting the Family Food Supply Be Identified?

Suggested sources for information included census reports, farm records and reports, health departments, stores - while food was purchased, extension agents, Farm Security Administration, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, nurses, physicians, rural ministers, and representatives of loan agencies.

Methods of Interesting Rural People in Increasing the Amount and Variety of Home-produced Foods

Suggested factors for consideration included:

Missouri.--An effort has been made to study why people do not follow suggestions made in the past on food production for the farm. It has been found that growing all food is not popular generally: (1) Farmers in groups talk of other things besides food. (2) Extension workers in many cases have been too apologetic about pushing the plan. (3) Too much specialization leads to disregarding the farm problem and family life as a whole. (4) Promotional and merchandising efforts encourage people to do less for themselves. (5) People do not think the problem of the food supply through in terms of health and of economic values to the family. (6) It is hard to break the traditional way of doing things. (7) We sometimes stop in our effort before our suggestions have been followed by all farmers.

Pertinent quotations included: "The feed-the-family-first plan fits every level of income. It is sound from every angle. We cannot oversell the idea."

Adequate food for the family should be regarded as the first mortgage on every farm. Family health and welfare is paramount if we are to do a successful job of operating our farms.

A home-food-production program is desirable for the entire community. Merchants do not object to it. They know that the rural families must be on a sound economic basis if the grocer is to prosper in his business.

It was suggested that if we build a sound live-at-home program, no matter whether the times get better or worse, we are guaranteed returns.

Every extension worker should be talking "live at home." It should be talked on the farm and on the road and in places other than meetings called for this specific purpose.

Our extension education should emphasize that essential foods must be provided before luxuries. Self-help is still honorable.

How Shall WE Aid the Less Ready Rural Families?

Are we justified in giving less time to the eager people and more time to the less ready? Are we "weakening the leaven" if we spend less time with the eager folks? Shall we have two definite programs: (1) For the eager group? (2) For the less-ready group?

Should our program compete or endeavor to compete with commercial radio programs? Do we need more showmanship for the less-ready group? Social workers say that the only way to reach the less-ready group is by direct contact. What kind of inducement is needed to interest the less-ready group? Are we trained to use showmanship methods with these groups?

In the discussion it was pointed out that the coordination of the programs of Farm Security Administration, Work Projects Administration, and similar organizations, with extension programs would bring a broader contact with the less-ready group.

Extension could also devote a larger part of its time - perhaps up to 30 percent - to an active program for the less ready.

The eager group may have to furnish the leadership for projects for the less-ready group.

It was emphasized that we need to work closely with all organizations and agencies in giving assistance to families in the various income groups. We must do more to bring about cooperation between agencies and organizations serving the farmer.

We, in extension, are aiding more people than we used to serve, but we are still a long way from the goal of 90 percent. We used to reach 300 families in each county. Now the number frequently reaches 400 and, in some cases, as many as 800 families enrolled in county project work.

Sometimes the lack of neighborliness in certain communities prevents encouragement being given to the needy families.

A limited group of farm families need to be activated and interested in doing something about helping themselves. Although we do not believe that the Extension Service should bring pressure to do this, yet it is our duty to provide the educational means for neighbors and others in the community to encourage this particular group.

Another group which Extension does not reach so widely are the young mothers and fathers who cannot come to meetings because they have children too young to be left alone. Still, it is most important that these parents should have knowledge of proper diet and good food habits.

Panel Discussions

The panel discussions of the topic, "What can extension do about it?" were participated in by specialists in nutrition and related fields.

One of the chairmen introduced the subject by stating that the morning conference had seemed to indicate that some people believed that in the live-at-home program, the Extension Service might have on hand a good deal of slow-selling merchandise. When businessmen are confronted by this situation, they either put out a new product, or decide, after careful study, to put more and better merchandising behind the old one.

Here are some questions we must, therefore, ask:

What are the things that will arouse interest and create desire by the farm family for an adequate food supply?

How can we remove physical and mental obstacles?

Do we need to make a survey?

The first job is to assemble information derived from surveys, studies, and experiences of extension and other agencies, including also suggestions of sociologists and psychologists who have studied the problem. With this background, we can develop a coordinated program enlisting the aid of other agencies, and can popularize authentic material. Extension editors can help us in making the facts glamorous and in presenting them to the public.

North Dakota.--Result demonstrations are very useful. Demonstration gardens in North Dakota Extension, working in cooperation with Farm Security Administration, proved a valuable device, with tours lasting several days, so scheduled that farmers could attend two or three demonstrations and not have to travel more than 20 or 30 miles.

Timeliness was stressed as very important.

One point of view recommended that publications covering the food supply should be issued in a series of booklets, each covering one subject, because they are more easily read, the teaching is more effective, and the booklets cost less. On the other hand, it was suggested that the farmer prefers his information in one volume and does not classify into agricultural engineering, or other subjects, the information he desires.

Others brought out the fact that farm-management studies show that the most successful families are largely those who produce their own food supply, evidently because the ability which enables a man to become a success, also makes him think of his family needs first, and helps him to recognize home food production as one of the important items in his success.

The method of attacking the problem will vary with the locality, but generally the method includes an intensive type of extension teaching to create a desire for two things: (1) Health, (2) more economical (and therefore more profitable) living, which may be had at one's elbow. If this desire is stimulated, many other things will take care of themselves.

Stress was given to the fact that State food supply committees should not be too unwieldy. They need the local viewpoint and avoidance of the appearance of "feeding" the program to the public; hence, committees should have assistance of county agricultural and home agents and farm people, as well as nutrition, garden, home management, and farm-management specialists.

The matter of right seed varieties has been solved in some States by obtaining assistance from seed distributors who suggested collections of seed packets of satisfactory varieties for a given-sized family. The Farm Security Administration made up collections which proved very helpful. Also, farmers were requested to save seed from their best plants.

The subject of human nutrition can well be tied in with the subject of animal nutrition and be made more effective by means of colored films, movies, exhibits, demonstrations, tours, and other publicity and agencies. The value of small handbooks for agents, colored envelopes, cartoons or post cards, contests, definite enrollments, and cooperation with other agencies emphasizing the family living program were suggested as aids in carrying forward an integrated program with all participating.

When the question was raised whether each state should have a food supply committee, it was pointed out that there are farm family food supply committees in all States represented, except Indiana. Each State will, of course, have to make its own decision on this question and handle the program in accordance with the best interests of farmers in its State.

A committee can correlate many of the activities of the subject-matter specialists in relation to the over-all food supply project.

The important thing is to have all specialists understand the necessity for integration of all subject matter relating to the project.

A committee can also evolve plans and materials which will facilitate the operation of the project.

The first step is to educate all members of the State extension staff in the fundamentals of the project.

Although opinions, both on the panels and in the conferences, varied as to how the Farm Family Food Supply Program should be started, the general conclusion was that this subject offers an ideal over-all project for every phase of extension work to stress and carry forward in the ensuing years, with special emphasis at the present time on the importance of Nutrition and National Defense.

In the discussion of the topic, What should extension contribute? these points were suggested: (1) State the nutrition problem. (2) Offer a program and procedure that fits local situations. (3) Train its own workers to meet the problems. (4) Offer suggestions and give training, if requested, to representatives of other organizations as to how they can take part. (5) Summarize accomplishment and give due credit to other organizations.

Minnesota.--The extension nutritionists in Minnesota are assisting in the adult and 4-H extension nutrition and health programs by training local leaders. They have established and maintained close contact with Work Projects Administration, Farm Security Administration, county nurses, National Youth Administration, county superintendents of schools, and other individuals and agencies. County agricultural and home demonstration extension agents have called meetings of county nutrition committees, which the extension nutritionist attended. The senior nutritionist is chairman of the State Nutrition Committee, which has met twice this year.

The best results have come from counties where the nutrition committee members have met, decided upon problems that should be cared for, and agreed what each organization could do to meet them. Each worker has then proceeded with her own program, and constantly attempted, as she interviewed homemakers and their families, to meet the problems in her own way.

Kansas is working on a 5-year garden plan, training two leaders from each unit, in which unit the 4-H leaders and their husbands are included. Leaders are met 1 day each year and given enough material to last through the year. The plan suggests that a roll call be taken at each meeting, giving timely garden topics. The program (5-year) included 2 years on vegetables, 1 year on fruit, 1 year on small fruits, and 1 year on review. They have summer tours which help to sell the program. The training meetings emphasize: (1) Timely garden items; (2) Air-conditioned gardens; (3) Adapted varieties; (4) Drought-resistant varieties; (5) Fall gardens; (6) Irrigation, using the method of subirrigation on

small intensively cultivated gardens; (7) Family management of the garden on plots away from house; (8) Windbreaks; (9) Garden tours; (10) Striving toward an ever-normal food storage.

South Carolina.--D. W. Watkins, State director of extension, describes the Farm Family Food Supply Program as carried on in that State:

"Farming in South Carolina has been built on the tradition of producing crops for cash sale. Cotton and tobacco are the cash crops which are grown, but these cannot be eaten. Better farm living includes a well-rounded diet. Most of this can be raised on the farm.

"In South Carolina, two-thirds of the farms are cultivated by sharecroppers, or renters, or are so mortgaged that the owners scarcely deserve the name. Fifteen percent of the farm families own the land they operate, with no mortgage, or mortgage small enough not to be burdensome. One-third of the tenants move every year.

"Three or four years ago, the farm-management people were asked to make a survey of income and food production on South Carolina farms, list the obstacles to home food production, and obtain examples of methods used by farmers who had overcome these obstacles. One result was the reporting of cases in which constructive landlords - sharecropper relations - brought about mutual response and benefits. A publication was based on 100 such cases. South Carolina now has a very definite summary of food needs and food possibilities.

"Last fall, data was obtained from a majority of counties as to the amount of 10 different foods and feeds, essential to successful farm management and family health, being produced. This was done as a volunteer service by AAA committeemen in checking compliance.

"Extension's job in connection with this program was to identify, discover, and develop leadership in the State. Families were enrolled on the volunteer basis who agreed to raise 75 percent of their food supplies during the year. Out of 12,000 enrolled, 2,500 completed their food production plans.

"The first year of this program closed in February 1941, and certificates signed by the Governor were issued to families who reached the goal they had set. Increased emphasis will be placed on this enrollment and appropriate follow-up work this coming year.

"In studying our problem, we found that our literature was much too complicated for the simpler part of our population, and much of it was aimed at commercial production. In the last 5 years we have produced a wide variety of very brief simple publications on phases of home living.

"The Extension Service, being an educational agency, should speak with the authority that comes from having facts to serve as a basis of

action. I would caution you against too much promotional publicity until something is actually done."

The discussion, What should extension expect of other agencies? developed the following suggestions: It is necessary for us of extension to insure close cooperation among ourselves, in order to have similar cooperation with other agencies. Factors which affect this cooperation, are: (1) The flexibility of our extension organization; (2) Personalities naturally affect our ability to work with others; (3) Our ability to see the other fellow's point of view; (4) Our willingness to share work as well as credit.

In closing the Chicago conference, Mr. Hochbaum, of the Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, stated that our being just a little jumbled in our minds as to how we are going about this when we get home, is a good sign. He pointed out that in tackling this job of the Farm Family Food Supply, we should approach it from three angles:

- (1) Extend subject matter information to include the broad objectives we have discussed here.
- (2) Develop the best kind of cooperation with other groups engaged in activities closely related to the subject of nutrition.
- (3) Do some sound planning in working out the various angles of the food supply program for the State. The Farm Family Food Supply Committee should be able to bring the various extension groups together.
